

# State of South Dakota

NINETY-FIRST SESSION  
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, 2016

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## SENATE BILL NO. 81

Introduced by: Senators Heinert, Bradford, Brown, Frerichs, Hunhoff (Bernie), Peters, Sutton, and Tieszen and Representatives Bordeaux, Haggar (Don), Hawks, Killer, McCleerey, Ring, Schoenfish, Verchio, and Wollmann

1 FOR AN ACT ENTITLED, An Act to create the paraprofessional tuition assistance scholarship  
2 program.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA:

4 Section 1. That chapter 13-55 be amended by adding a NEW SECTION to read:

5 There is hereby established the paraprofessional tuition assistance scholarship program to  
6 be administered by the Office of Indian Education within the Department of Education. The  
7 purpose of the scholarship program is to allow the pursuit of full teacher certification by the  
8 paraprofessionals employed by qualifying schools.

9 Section 2. That chapter 13-55 be amended by adding a NEW SECTION to read:

10 The department shall select eligible paraprofessionals for participation in the program. In  
11 order to be eligible for the paraprofessional tuition assistance scholarship program, an applicant  
12 shall:

13 (1) Be employed as a paraprofessional in a qualifying public school;

14 (2) Be recommended for the program by a principal in the qualifying public school; and



- 1 (3) Enroll in an accredited postsecondary institution located in South Dakota that  
2 participates in the program and offers a baccalaureate degree in elementary or  
3 secondary education.

4 Section 3. That chapter 13-55 be amended by adding a NEW SECTION to read:

5 For purposes of this Act, a qualifying school is any school in the state that:

- 6 (1) Is an accredited public school;
- 7 (2) Is willing to collaborate with the accredited postsecondary institution on student  
8 teaching and other associated requirements of the elementary or secondary education  
9 program;
- 10 (3) Serves a student population for which the school-level results for the 2014-15  
11 academic year on the state academic assessment are below the statewide average  
12 proficiency in English language arts and mathematics; and
- 13 (4) Serves a student population of which at least fifty percent is comprised of Native  
14 American students.

15 Section 4. That chapter 13-55 be amended by adding a NEW SECTION to read:

16 A person is eligible to participate in the paraprofessional tuition assistance scholarship  
17 program for up to four consecutive academic years or until the attainment of a baccalaureate  
18 degree in elementary or secondary education, whichever comes first. The secretary of education  
19 may grant exceptions to the continuous enrollment requirement if good cause is demonstrated.

20 Section 5. That chapter 13-55 be amended by adding a NEW SECTION to read:

21 The amount of tuition assistance provided in any semester to an eligible student may not  
22 exceed the cost of the credit hours for which the student registered for that semester. During a  
23 single academic year, including the summer session, the amount of tuition assistance provided  
24 to any eligible student may not exceed the tuition and generally applicable fees for forty-five

1 credit hours at a South Dakota public postsecondary institution as of July 1, 2015. Total tuition  
2 assistance may not exceed the tuition and generally applicable fees for one hundred twenty  
3 credit hours. Tuition assistance payments shall be paid to a postsecondary institution on behalf  
4 of an eligible student there enrolled in the amount of tuition and fees of an eligible student upon  
5 submission of proof of registration of the student at the institution. Participating institutions  
6 shall establish proof of registration for all paraprofessional tuition assistance scholarship  
7 students for each semester.

8 Section 6. That chapter 13-55 be amended by adding a NEW SECTION to read:

9 In order to maintain eligibility for the paraprofessional tuition assistance scholarship  
10 program, an eligible student shall:

- 11 (1) Maintain enrollment at the accredited postsecondary institution;
- 12 (2) Maintain a cumulative 2.8 grade point average on a 4.0 scale;
- 13 (3) Make satisfactory academic progress toward a degree as determined by the student's  
14 program of study; and
- 15 (4) Continue working as a paraprofessional in the qualifying school while taking  
16 coursework.

17 If, however, factors beyond the control of an eligible student prevent the student from  
18 meeting any of the requirements of subdivisions (1) to (3), inclusive, the department may  
19 temporarily waive the requirements of those subdivisions if good cause is demonstrated.